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AFRICA

East
Uganda

Stock, Eugene

How
Uganda
was
Saved

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By

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CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY
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*Our illustrations show the Cathedrals
that have been erected on Namirembe
Hill, including the new buildings to be
consecrated on 18 September, 1919*

How Uganda was Saved

A PLAIN NARRATIVE

ON 3 August, 1858, Captain Speke, exploring in East Africa, came upon what he described as "the vast expanse of the pale-blue waters" of a great Lake, or "Nyanza." Looking northward, no land was to be seen; and his native guide, in response to his inquiries, "kept throwing forward his right hand, and, making repeated snaps of his fingers, endeavoured to indicate something immeasurable, adding that nobody knew, but it probably extended to the end of the world." So wrote Speke at the time. But presently he was informed by some Arab traders that on the farther side of the Lake there was a country called *Uganda*; and further, that a great river flowed thence northward. "This," wrote Speke, "I believe to be the Nile itself." "What a field," he added, "is open to the world, if England does not neglect this discovery!"—and he named the great Lake the *Victoria Nyanza*.

Four years later, in 1862, Speke, on another exploring expedition with Colonel Grant, travelled round the western side of the Lake, entered Uganda, stayed there with King Mtesa some months, and then marched northward, following the course of the Nile to Khartoum, and came safely down into Egypt. His travels, and his

account of Uganda, published first in "Blackwood" and afterwards in a volume, excited the deepest interest. Yet during the next twelve years only two Europeans casually visited the country, and no one stayed there.

Then came Henry Stanley. His first journey, in 1870, had been "to find Livingstone." His second, after Livingstone's death, took him to Uganda, where he stayed some time, and thence westward to the Congo regions, where he determined the course of that mighty river. But from Uganda he wrote his memorable challenge to Christendom to send Missions there, which appeared in the "Daily Telegraph" of 15 November, 1875.¹ Within six months the Church Missionary Society had responded by sending a small pioneer party—among them Lieut. Shergold Smith and Alexander Mackay.

The first English missionaries, after many delays *en route*, reached Uganda in June, 1877. The French Roman Catholic Mission followed in 1879. As soon as a few converts had been baptized, persecution arose, and many were put to death. Bishop Hannington was murdered by King Mwanga's order before he reached the country. His last journal appeared in the "Times"; and a leading article (30 October, 1886) recalled the old saying that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, adding, "On the success of the Uganda experiment, with its alternation of favourable and adverse circumstances, depends the happiness of the

¹ Long afterwards, in January, 1901, Stanley told the story of his own attempt to introduce Christianity to King Mtesa, in the "Cornhill Magazine."

vast continent for generations." The "experiment" was the missions; no commercial or political enterprise had yet been attracted to Uganda. The "adverse circumstances" became more serious, and in October, 1888, the missionaries, both English and French, were expelled from the country; but they re-entered it just a year later.

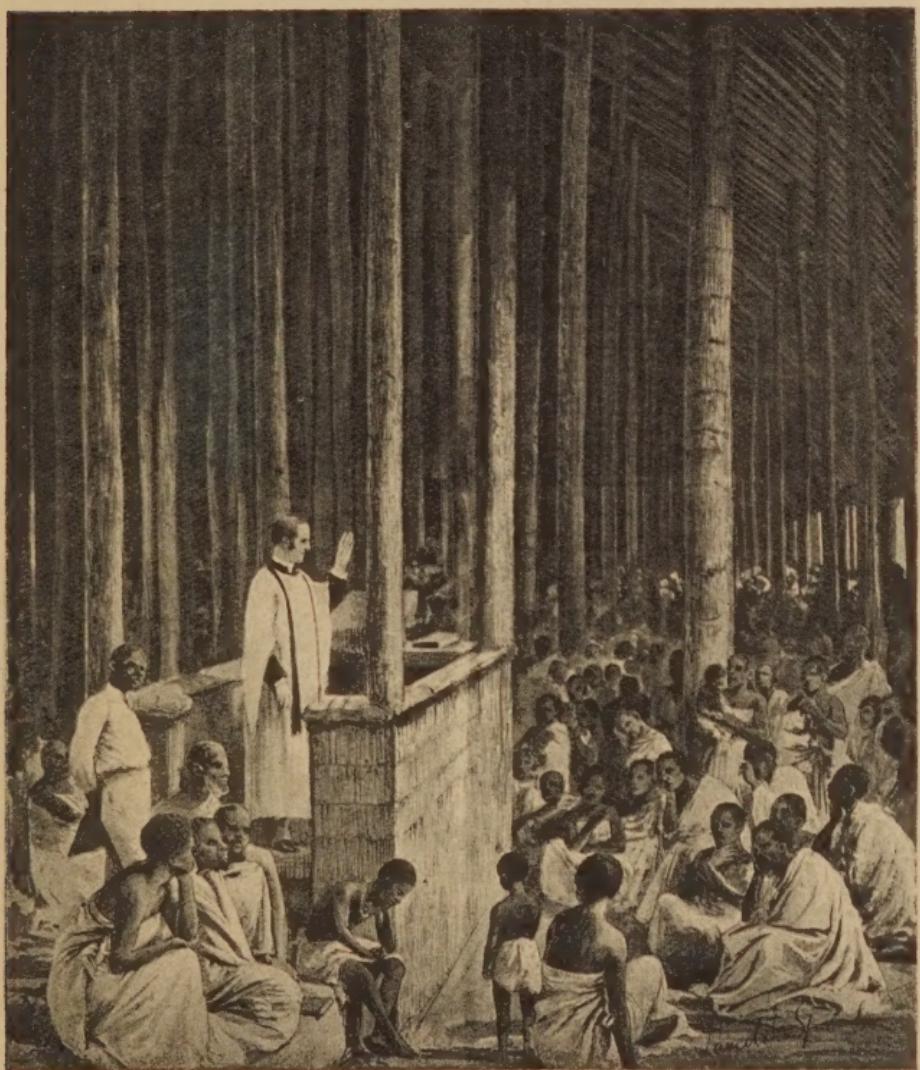
Meanwhile, the "scramble for Africa," and the division of "spheres of influence" among the European Powers arranged at the Berlin Congress of 1884-5, was in full progress. The high-handed proceedings of some of the German officers in the districts which became "German East Africa" caused much fighting and bloodshed, and both Roman and Anglican missionaries in those districts, including the Universities' Mission to Central Africa under Bishop Smythies, suffered in various ways. In the territory now called British East Africa, then merely a "sphere of influence," only mercantile enterprise was at work, and peace was maintained. Uganda's future was not yet settled, and when the missionaries returned there in 1889, they were followed for the first time by three other Europeans. These were two agents of the Imperial British East Africa Company, and one German agent, Dr. Peters, both parties seeking exclusive trading facilities. King Mwanga had provisionally accepted the Company's "flag" before Peters came; but when he arrived the French priests persuaded the king to give it up, and to discard the influence of the English missionaries, putting himself under German protection.

But the fate of Uganda was not to be decided on the spot, but in London. At the very time that Peters was gaining his point, the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, not knowing what was going on in Uganda itself, was negotiating with Germany the exact boundaries of the two "spheres of influence" in Africa. He sent to the C.M.S. President for information, and Sir John Kennaway, with three colleagues (the present writer being one of them), were received by him on 20 May, 1890. He asked us which of two lines of demarcation would be best. One would cut Uganda in half; the other would include the whole of it in the British sphere. We, equally unconscious of what Peters was doing, strongly urged the reasonableness of the latter. Three weeks later, the final Arrangement was published. It left all Uganda to England; it transferred the Protectorate of Zanzibar to the British Crown; it gave Germany territories elsewhere, including Heligoland! This put an end to Dr. Peters' treaty and his influence; and before the year 1890 was over, two personages arrived in Uganda. One was Captain (now General Sir Frederick) Lugard, representing, not the British Government—which even then had no intention of hoisting the British flag—but the British East Africa Company and its commercial interests. The other was Bishop Tucker.

But Uganda was not saved yet. The Company presently found that it could not bear the expense of this new enterprise, 800 miles in the interior of Africa, added to its already extensive responsibilities nearer to, and on, the East Coast.

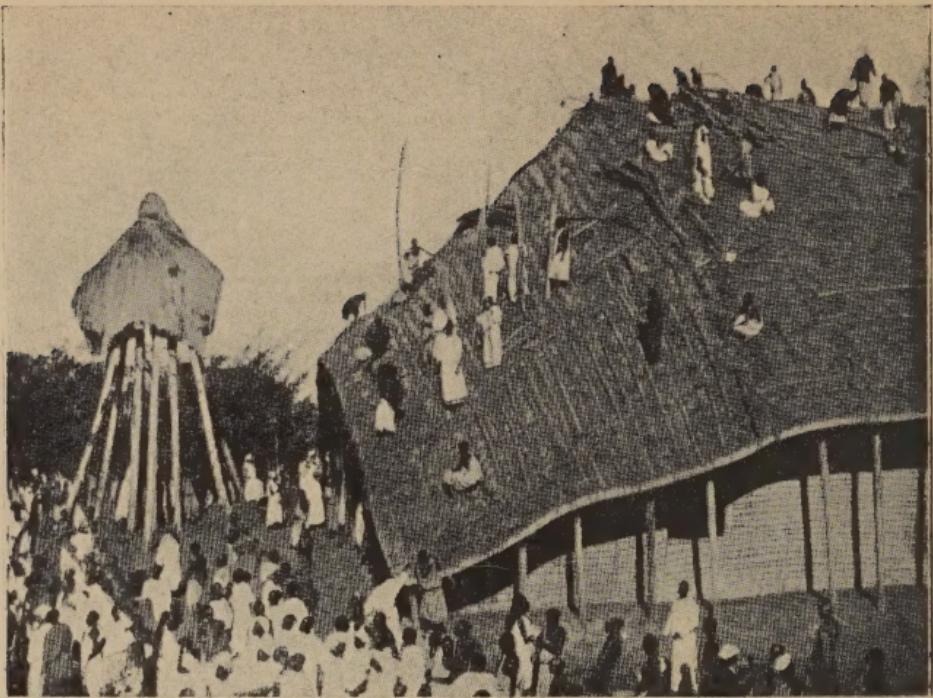


The First Church on Namirembe Hill

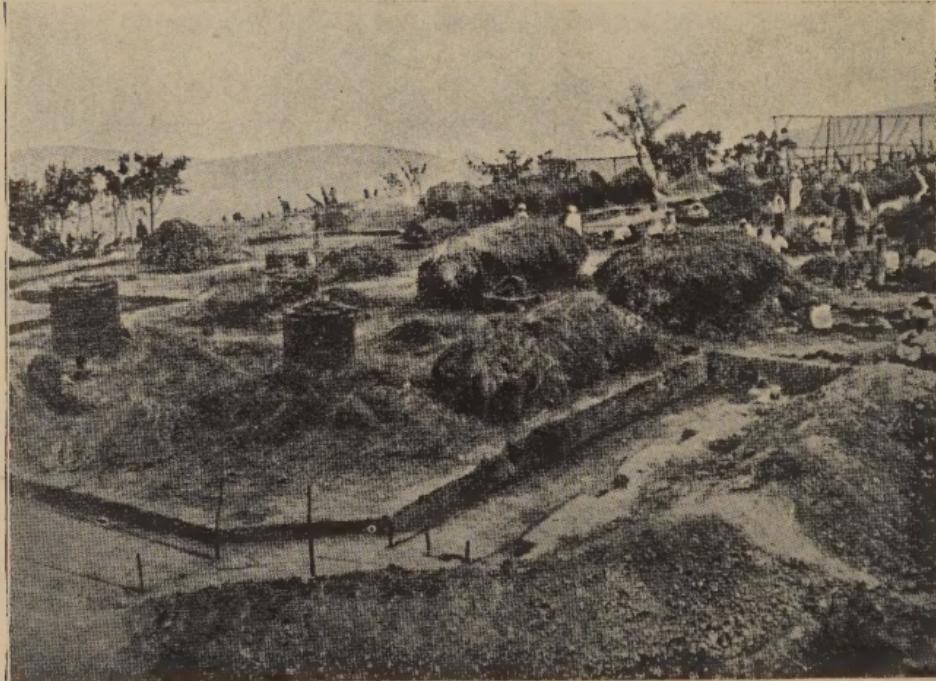


The Interior of the Second Cathedral—the "forest of poles"

(Blown down 11 October, 1894)



The Demolition of the Third Cathedral
(*Stripping the Reed Roof*)



The Foundations of the Fourth Cathedral

Its shareholders were already "taking out their dividends in philanthropy," and could not go on increasing the capital. Its leaders pressed the Government to carry out the policy, avowed at the Brussels Conference, of taking strong measures against slavery and the slave trade, for which a railway from Mombasa to the Victoria Nyanza had been proposed. Germany was largely subsidizing its traders: why not England, too? The Foreign Office was in accord with this policy, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) and the Treasury objected to find the money. At length the Company, in despair, sent out positive orders to Captain Lugard to close up the whole business, and withdraw to the coast with all his staff.

And now we have Lugard's own account of his reception of the order, which, sent up from Mombasa by the Company's mail runners, reached Uganda in December, 1891. Let us read the words of his book, "The Rise of our East African Empire" (vol. ii, pp. 286-92):—

Everything in private or official letters seemed trivial in comparison with the outstanding communication which one letter contained. . . . A thunderbolt indeed! . . . This collapse will be terrible in its results. . . . All will mistrust our power and utterly mistrust our word. Well! if it is indeed to be done, there is a cruel wrong to be done. Hundreds, nay thousands, of lives may be sacrificed, and the blood must lie at some one's door. I have my orders—

Not mine to reason why,
Not mine to make reply—
Some one has blundered!

He told his second in command, Captain Williams, who "heard the news with utter

consternation," but said he had some money at his command, and he would spend "every penny he had in the world rather than break faith with the Baganda."

Bishop Tucker knew nothing of all this. He had only remained a few weeks in Uganda, and had hurried back to England to report what he had seen of the English Church Mission and its Christian converts, and to get more men for it. In September, 1891, he was staying at Balmacara on Loch Alsh in West Scotland, at a country house belonging to Lord Blythswood; and the present writer was there also. Suddenly Sir W. Mackinnon, the Chairman of the British East Africa Company, arrived in his fine steam yacht, and told of the Company's orders of withdrawal having been sent out. He himself was deeply grieved at this step, and asked if the Church Missionary Society could not help to counteract it. The Company needed £40,000 to hold on for another year, by which time he hoped the Government might be induced to take Uganda under its protection. He would give £10,000 himself, and try to raise £15,000 among his personal friends. Could the Society raise another £15,000? There seemed little hope of this, as the Committee could not hand missionary contributions over to a trading company. But on October 30, at the annual meeting of the Society's "Gleaners' Union," Bishop Tucker had the opportunity of stating the case to an audience which crowded the old Exeter Hall, and of inviting special contributions to enable the Company to hold on. There were probably not half a dozen wealthy men in the hall, and

the large majority were middle-class folk with small incomes. But presently a note came up to the platform—not from a well-known liberal donor, but from an anonymous friend known to the present writer as keeping neither carriage nor man-servant—"I will give £5000." This was read out to the meeting, and evoked a burst of enthusiasm, which issued in £3000 more being promised that night. In a few days £16,000 was handed over to the Company ; Sir W. Mackinnon fulfilled his own promises ; and a cable message was sent to Mombasa, ordering the instant dispatch of picked runners to carry the news to Uganda. Only, would they arrive in time to stop the withdrawal and save the situation ?

Let Lugard again tell his own story. A fortnight had passed since the order of withdrawal had come ; he had told no one of it except his colleague, for fear of the consequences ; but they had been quietly preparing to wind up affairs and leave. Even the English missionaries knew nothing of the impending calamity. Then, quite unexpectedly, on 7 January, 1892, a party of runners arrived from the coast with urgent letters. "I opened them," wrote Lugard, "apathetically, careless what new directions about details they might contain." Suddenly he came upon the cable message received at Mombasa in November. "I handed it to Williams, and we shook hands over it like a couple of schoolboys. It *was* a great relief!" But was Uganda really saved, even then ? There was a reprieve for a year ; but after that ?

Lugard's dread of what might have taken

place in Uganda had he withdrawn was soon proved to be justified. A new band of French missionaries arrived, and, knowing nothing of the later news, told everybody that the British were withdrawing. Great excitement ensued, and serious fighting took place,—not, as has been often incorrectly stated, between the two bodies of Christian converts, for they were both as yet few in number,—but between the two parties of chiefs and people who (quite apart from religion) respectively favoured the Company's influence and the German protection which Peters had offered. Lugard, who calls the two parties Wa-Fransa and Wa-Ingleza, was obliged to interpose in the fighting, and when the truth became known that he was not withdrawing, the country gradually settled down again.¹

But the incident, owing to a curious circumstance (not needing explanation now), led to an outburst of feeling in Europe. The letters from the French priests reached Paris some weeks before Lugard's dispatches and letters from the English missionaries reached London; the result being an explosion of wrath in France, and a demand upon the British Government "to wash its hands of deeds which were a shame to civilization." In the absence of any direct news, the London newspapers were perplexed; but the arrival presently of the English mails quickly corrected the false impression; and the tem-

¹ It must be understood that this account is necessarily very brief and imperfect, though as accurate as is possible in a few words. The whole story in full detail is told by Lugard in the book previously referred to.



The Fourth Cathedral on Namirembe
(Destroyed by fire 23 September, 1910)



The Ruins of the Fourth Cathedral after the Fire



Bishop Willis giving an Address at the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the new Cathedral



The new Cathedral, from the Bishop's Garden
(To be consecrated 13 September, 1919)

porary but very warm controversy need not have been referred to here, but for its happy result in converting the widespread indifference to Uganda, and indeed ignorance that such a place existed, into keen general interest and a determination that England should not let it go. Public meetings were held all over the country, many of them officially summoned by the mayors, and supported by men of all political and ecclesiastical parties ; and at some of them Lugard himself spoke, having just returned to England.

Meanwhile, at this very time, came a change of Government. Lord Salisbury's Cabinet had hesitated ; what would Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet do ? The Company's "one more year" was running its course, and what then ? Happily Lord Rosebery, the new Foreign Secretary, realized the urgency of the question. "We, *at any rate, I*"—he said to a deputation—"view Uganda as a country of great possibilities, as the key, perhaps, of Central Africa, as commanding the Nile basin, as a field recently of heroic enterprise, as a land that has been watered by the blood of our saints and martyrs ; and I, for one, as a Scotsman, can never be indifferent to a land which witnessed the heroic exploits of Alexander Mackay, that Christian Bayard whose reputation will always be dear not only in his own northern country but throughout the Empire." So the new Government promised to pay for the continued occupation of Uganda for three months, pending fuller consideration ; and when Mr. Labouchere moved in Parliament that the country be evacuated, he was beaten by

368 to 46. A Special Commissioner, Sir Gerald Portal, was sent out to Africa ; and grants for further outlay were voted by large majorities. Sir G. Portal's report strongly recommended (1) the establishment of a Protectorate, (2) the construction of a railway from the East Coast to the Lake. On 18 August, 1894, the Protectorate was publicly proclaimed in the capital of Uganda amid general rejoicing ; and on 13 June, 1895, Sir Edward Grey's announcement that the railway was to be made was received by the House of Commons with loud cheering.

Thus we have seen "How Uganda was Saved." It is needless to continue the history farther. We may only note that the king, Mwanga, who had caused so much trouble, revolted in 1897, and was afterwards captured and deported to the Seychelles ; that in the same year a dangerous mutiny of the Mohammedan Sudanese troops employed by the British authorities was quelled by the bravery of the Christian converts, as was cordially acknowledged at the time ; that the railway, 583 miles from Mombasa to the Nyanza, was completed, despite almost insuperable difficulties, in December, 1901 ; that in 1900 Sir H. Johnston settled the future government of the country, with the Kabaka (King), the Katikiro (Prime Minister), and the Council of Chiefs, under the general supervision of the British Commissioner ; that in 1902 the Katikiro, an upright ruler and faithful Christian, was invited to England for King Edward's coronation, and, three years later, being knighted by the King, became Sir Apolo Kagwa ; that the young

Kabaka, Daudi (David) Chwa, himself visited England in 1913; that the Protectorate of Uganda now comprises extensive territories outside the old kingdom of Mtesa and Mwanga; and that all kinds of developments have taken place in industries, commerce, education, peaceful intercourse, and the amenities of civilization.

One fact, however, must be added. Uganda had its part in the Great War. So far as the present writer has seen, no account of this part has ever appeared in the newspapers or reviews. But much fighting took place in the earlier years on the western side of the Victoria Nyanza, where the south-western border of Uganda marched with the German district of Ruanda. The Church Missionary Society's missionaries, and the Baganda chieftains, placed themselves at the disposal of the British authorities within six days of war being declared; and the people offered themselves for service by thousands. The C.M.S. hospitals were quickly enlarged, and were in constant use for British, Indian, and African wounded. Decorations have since been conferred upon the English missionary doctors, the Kabaka, the Katikiro, and three Christian kings of neighbouring States within the Protectorate.

Is Uganda a Christian country? If by "Uganda" is meant the whole Protectorate, with its population of 3,000,000, the answer is, No. Although the kings and leading chiefs of three of the outlying protected States are Christians, the majority of their people, and of the inhabitants of other outer territories, are not. But for the original Uganda, the kingdom of

Mtesa and Mwanga, now officially called by its real local name Buganda, the answer may fairly be Yes. The population, about 700,000, may be divided into three roughly equal parts, Anglican, Roman, and Pagan, with a much smaller number of Mohammedans. The Anglican Church of Uganda is an organized body, with its own constitution and synods, and more than fifty native clergymen, and most of the leading chiefs belong to it. Bishop Tucker was succeeded by Bishop Willis in 1912. No other Protestant Church is represented. The whole Bible has been translated into Luganda (as the language is called), the greater part by Pilkington, the Cambridge classic, who was killed in the Sudanese Mutiny of 1897; and it has since been revised by Miss Chadwick, daughter of the late Bishop of Derry, and the late Rev. H. W. Duta, the first native clergyman ordained. There are also Luganda versions of the Prayer Book, the "Pilgrim's Progress," various manuals and commentaries, etc. The cathedral now to be consecrated replaces the large building erected by the natives in 1904, and destroyed by fire in 1910.

Several public men who have visited Uganda have borne frank testimony to the good results of British influence on the whole, and of the Mission in particular. Ex-President Roosevelt wrote in 1910, "The result is astounding," rebuking those who rail at missionary work. Mr. Winston Churchill, after referring, in an address at the National Liberal Club in 1907, to the "naked savages" in other districts, added, "Once in Uganda, you are in another world.

You find clothed, cultivated, educated natives . . . a very great number who had embraced the Christian faith sincerely." Mr. Herbert Samuel, in 1902, sent the "Westminster Gazette" a graphic account, beginning, "It is profoundly impressive to attend a Sunday service here." Nor have the Chief Commissioners, with their fuller knowledge, said less. Sir H. Johnston pronounced Uganda "one of the greatest triumphs to which the advocates of Christian propaganda can point." Colonel Hayes Sadler said, before he first went out, that he had read the printed accounts "with amazement," and when he returned two years later he said, "Now I have seen the work I am still amazed." Sir Hesketh Bell wrote, "No one admires more than I do the wonderful results obtained by the C.M.S. in Uganda." Lastly, Sir Henry Stanley, shortly before he died in 1904, wrote to the leading chiefs, "Your prayers and ours ascend and meet at the Throne of God, and with one blessing He blesses you and us."

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